Daily Report

Latin America

FBIS-LAT-88-077
Thursday
21 April 1988

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22D ECLA Meeting Opens in Brazil 20 April

PY210202 Brasilia Domestic Service in Portuguese 2200 GMT 20 Apr 88

[Text] The inflation rate for the month of April will be disclosed on schedule. The strike at the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics [IBGE], which ended yesterday, will not affect the calculation of the inflation rate for this month.

The IBGE will be fully responsible for calculating the inflation rate for April and for finding the technical means to disclose this information on schedule, that is, during the first 5 days of the month following the month to which the disclosed inflation rate corresponds.

This was guaranteed by Planning Minister Joao Batista de Abreu today, as he presided over the opening of the 22d period of sessions of ECLA at the Copacabana Palace Hotel in Rio.

The planning minister said that the calculation of the inflation rate will be made as usual, seeking to reflect the true behavior of prices during April.

During a chat with the media the minister denied any possibility of hyperinflation in Brazil in view of the measures taken by the government in the fiscal area.

The minister also said that cuts in public sector investments will continue. [recorded passage indistinct]

In the speech at the opening of the ECLA session, Minister Joao Batista de Abreu said that the resumption of the growth of Latin American and Caribbean countries is linked to the recovery of their capacity to save and invest through deep-rooted internal adjustments and the reduction of the transfer of resources abroad.

Brazil is hosting the ECLA conference for the first time in 30 years, and this meeting coincides with the organization's 40th anniversary.

The meeting was attended by representatives of the 40 member countries, as well as by delegations from European countries especially invited to the event.

Southern Cone Christian Democrats End Meeting

PY201738 La Paz La Red Panamericana in Spanish 1130 GMT 20 Apr 88

[Text] The third meeting of the Christian Democratic Organization of Southern Cone countries ended last night. Political leaders from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay participated in this meeting. Venezuelan representatives also participated in the meeting as special guests.

The closing ceremony, held in La Paz, was presided over by Bolivian Christian Democratic Party President (Jorge Agreda Valderrama), who expressed gratitude to the participants for their contribution in strengthening Christian Democratic principles in Latin American countries. Chilean Renan Fuentealba, chairman of the Christian Democratic Organization of Latin American countries, also spoke on the occasion. [recorded passage indistinct]

Cuba

Raul Castro Decorates TANA President

FL2004175388 Havana Television Service in Spanish 0000 GMT 17 Apr 88

[Text] Army General Raul Castro, first vice president of the Councils of State and Ministers, decorated Guillermo Torriello in Havana today. Torriello, who is president of the Anti-Imperialist Tribunal of Our America [TANA], was awarded the Playa Giron Order and the 30th FAR Anniversary medal.

[Begin recording] [Vice President Carlos Rafael Rodriguez] Dear Guillermo Torriello: Cuba includes you as part of its invincible revolutionary forces. This is not only because you are an honorary member of our Territorial Troops Militia but also because, from the very beginning of our fighting, before and after victory, you have been on our side. We have never lacked your active and combative solidarity. In the most difficult hours, your words of friendship stood for the decision of the American nations to respond with a popular presence, in which men like you represented the real America, to the isolation that certain governments wanted to impose on us

[Torriello] On this so very significant occasion, the prescient mandate of the Popol Vuh, the sacred book of the Quiches, which says, let all rise up, let all be called, let there be no group among us left behind, is revived deep in my American consciousness. I will continue to devote my strength with renewed energy to that mandate. [end recording]

Linares Calvo Concludes Visit to Uruguay

FL191515 Havana Radio Progreso Network in Spanish 1100 GMT 19 Apr 88

[Text] Francisco Linares Calvo, minister of labor [title as heard] of Cuba, has ended his visit to Uruguay. Linares told the press in Montevideo that the equivalent of $1.3 billion will be allocated this year to render social security loans to 900,000 retirees, among other beneficiaries.

GRANMA Announces Seminar on Socialist Traits

FL191900 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 1700 GMT 19 Apr 88

[Station commentary]

[Text] The political and ideological seminar on socialism and man in Cuba, announced in the daily GRANMA today, will be an appropriate culmination of the national drive honoring the heroic guerrilla fighter. We do not hesitate to refer to it now, because the country has experienced recently events in its history which are closely related to the seminar's slogan. One of the events, and undoubtedly the most valuable and significant one, has been and still is the rectification process.

The rectification process has taught us to what degree we are ready to carry out the great work of the construction of socialism. All of us have participated in this process in some way and, because of this, the experience is unforgettable. We have seen the new social consciousness in action, but we have also noticed ideas and behaviors that originated in the capitalist past. We have seen the essential traits that distinguish the socialist constructor and, at the same time, we have also seen people who, although they are identified with the objectives of socialism, assume attitudes that are not consistent with this identification. We have known the personality of the socialist man forged in the course of revolutionary changes. But at the same time, we have seen ideological inconsistencies that go from negative expressions in labor behavior to unscrupulous practices of insulting favoritism and shameful adulation.

In sum, we have contrasted the simple, honest attitude, which is open to criticism, with the prepotency and arrogance of those who underestimate the views of others, stifle initiative, and strangle criticism. The seminar on socialism and man in Cuba will put us in contact with these realities and surely contribute valuable ideas. Above all, it will show us that communist consciousness is not only the result of academic work, the sum of theoretical knowledge, nor is it the natural result of reflections of the situation surrounding us or a gift of history, but the molding in the daily struggle that goes from voluntary work to surrendering our life for the cause we have embraced.

Data Collection of Mir Space Station Reported

FL151911 Havana Television Service in Spanish 1700 GMT 15 Apr 88

[Text] Astrophysical research is being done today on board the manned Mir space station with the use of the Roentgen observatory and the Glazar ultraviolet telescope. Geophysical and technical experiments will also be done, and the health of the crew will be examined.

In accordance with the experiment Caribe-Intercosmos 88, Cosmonauts Vladimir Titov and Musa Manarov will take photographs and spectrometric measurements of certain regions in Cuba. The goal of this experiment is to study the current state and development of the geological systems in the tropical zone in conjunction with the photographs taken on board the Mir space station and the Cosmos 1766 and Cosmos 1769 satellites.

The research is being done from laboratory airplanes, as well as with land and maritime measuring units.

The results of the experiment will be used to evaluate the processes that operate in the regions of intense agricultural and industrial use. The information will also be used to benefit fishery resources in our country.

The Caribe-Intercosmos experiment includes the participation of specialists from Bulgaria, the GDR, Cuba, Poland, and the USSR.

Antigua and Barbuda

EEC Announces Additional Allocation of Aid

FL192320 Bridgetown CANA in English 1406 GMT 16 Apr 88

[Text] St. Johns, Antigua, April 16, CANA—Antigua and Barbuda will receive an extra EC3.3 million dollars in aid from the European Community under the Lome III Convention, the European Commission announced here.

Originally, the country was allocated EC11.5 million dollars in aid under the convention, governing economic cooperation between the European Community and the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) group of developing countries.

The European Commission said in a release that Antigua and Barbuda was one of a number of ACP countries benefitting from this special additional allocation midway through the life of the five-year convention.

"The main criterion to be included in this group of countries is the degree of implementation of projects and programming under the present indicative programme, although, in the case of Antigua and Barbuda, some delays in implementing the Lome III programme have occurred," the release said.

European Commission President Lorenzo Natali expressed hope in the release that this additional financial assistance would provide means for continuing with the priority operations for the economic and social development of Antigua and Barbuda.

Barbados

Government Ends Sugar Price Support System

FL200015 Bridgetown CANA in English 2043 GMT 18 Apr 88

[Text] Bridgetown, Barbados, April 18, CANA—Agriculture Minister Warwick Franklin on Monday signalled the Barbados Government's current price support system for sugar was at an end, telling farmers any further assistance would be based on the diversified production of sugar and non-sugar crops.

Franklin, speaking at the start of a week-long meeting here of Caribbean sugar technologists, said sugar's foreign exchange earning capacity and the jobs it provided were key considerations behind the government's decision to introduce support of the financially-strapped industry back in 1982.

But the situation was different now, he said.

"...The government cannot consider any further support for the industry on the basis of the programme for 1982/86. Any further support, if at all necessary, will have to be based on a diversified production of sugar and non-sugar crops," Franklin said.

"It will have to reward the sugar farmers which will increase their yields per acre and it will only cover the tonnage necessary to satisfy our premium priced markets," he added.

Under the price support programme, the privately-owned sugar industry was authorised to issue government-guaranteed bonds to finance its sugar support price fund.

A sinking fund, into which the proceeds from periodic increases in the controlled price of locally sold sugar are paid, also was established under the act to meet redemption payments and other expenses.

Cotton, root crops, horticulture, and livestock are new areas of activity being promoted by government in its diversification programme to complement the sugar industry.

Franklin said the cooperation of farmers would be critical to the success of the diversification effort. He mentioned plans to press ahead with the development of cotton, in the face of reports of disenchantment about the industry's future.

In addition, government has agreed with the Caribbean Sea Island Cotton Ltd to join the international institute of cotton so as to be in a position to access the latest in cotton technology from around the world, Franklin reported.

"This programme forms a critical part of the government's diversification programme for the same reasons we have been supporting the sugar industry, namely: the crops capacity to earn foreign exchange; the employment opportunities it will offer," Franklin said.

Per Capita Income Increases 8.7 Percent

FL200020 Bridgetown CANA in English 2058 GMT 19 Apr 88

[By Reudon Eversley]

[Text] Bridgetown, Barbados, April 19, CANA—Barbados per capita income, the second highest in the Caribbean Community (Caricom) after the Bahamas, climbed 8.7 percent last year to a new high of BDS9,850 dollars (U.S.4,925), the government reported on Tuesday.

The increase recorded by this standard international guage for measuring a nation's prosperity accompanied a 2.2 percent expansion in the islands gross domestic product, whose value in real terms last year reached BDS845 million dollars.

"The 1987 outcome was the fifth successive year of expansion in the Barbados economy (after the 1981-82 recession) and the third highest rate of growth since 1981," said the government's annual economic report, tabled in Parliament by Prime Minister Erskine Sandiford ahead of the budget presentation on April 28.

The 1987 outturn, however, represented a slowdown from the 5.1 percent real growth of 1986.

"The major contributors to the growth in real output in 1987 were tourism with (an increase of) 13.9 percent, non-sugar agriculture with 9.1 percent, construction with 6.0 percent, wholesale and retail trade with 5.5 percent, and government services with 3.5 percent," said the report.

Manufacturing, sugar, and mining and quarrying output including crude oil, the other key sectors of the island's economy, showed declines of 24.0 percent, 6.6 percent, and 6.5 percent respectively.

Inflation remained low at 3.4 percent and unemployment increased marginally to 17.9 percent, despite the creation of 2,500 new jobs, the government said.

The island's visible trade balance was weakened by a 49 percent fall in domestic exports, and despite a 12.3 percent drop in imports, the deficit climbed from 628.8 million dollars in 1986 to 722.2 million dollars.

Domestic exports were valued at 214.5 million dollars, reflecting a steep fall in electronics exports following the 1986 closure of the plant belonging to the American-owned Intel Corporation.

Imports were valued at 936.6 million dollars. Consumer goods rose but imports of intermediate and capital goods declined.

In relation to public finances, the government's overall deficit reached a record 271.5 million dollars as expenditure growth of 18.8 percent outstripped the 7.3 percent increase in revenue.

A deficit of 95 million dollars was recorded on the current account.

The overall deficit was financed largely by foreign sources, including loans and grants.

The national debt at year-end was put at 1.5 billion dollars, a 17 percent increase on the previous year.

In the external sector, the overall balance of payments showed a 33 million dollar surplus, compared with one of 6 million at the end of 1986.

Foreign exchange reserves stood at 289.6 million dollars, covering 3.2 months of imports.

Dominican Republic

Government, Business, Labor Resume Talks

FL182344 Santo Domingo Radio Mil Network in Spanish 1720 GMT 18 Apr 88

[Text] The seventh round of the tripartite talks will resume tomorrow amid an increase in the prices of basic goods. The government is expected to respond to the demands of private sector workers.

President Balaguer plans to announce the lowering of the prices of 10 goods that comprise family staple items.

In accordance with the agreements reached at a meeting last Saturday between the sectors participating in the tripartite talks, the minimum wage that will be established will become retroactive to the first of this month.

Another agreement reached last Saturday includes an increase in social security for workers. A technical and financial study will be conducted for this purpose.

The church, which is the mediator in the tripartite talks, said that the social security measure needs to be implemented as soon as possible. The church also said that the talks between the government, businessmen, and workers include discussion of other problems, such as transportation and lowering of fares.

Labor Leader on Talks

FL2004190588 Santo Domingo Radio Mil Network in Spanish 1600 GMT 20 Apr 88

[Text] Francisco Antonio Santos, secretary general of the General Central Organization of Workers, CGT, has provided details on the seventh round of the tripartite dialogue:

[Begin Santos recording] The results of last night's meeting of the parties involved in the tripartite dialogue were not very encouraging as regards the government's position. The government did not have a position on the dollar rate. Saladin was heard to express his personal views, his submissions to the monetary board, the government, the Congress—but all of these were Saladin's views, not the government's. The government is the party we are talking to. Therefore, there was nothing, absolutely nothing, about the dollar rate, which is the crucial problem, the leading topic of the tripartite dialogue. Everything here hinges on the dollar rate: production, prices—everything, absolutely everything. [end recording]

Santos said that Lic Roberto Saladin, governor of the Central Bank, did not present any specific proposals:

[Begin Santos recording] As concerns the problem of prices, the government was not serious in its response, not serious at all. It just said what it has done, what (?it's going to do), but there was nothing (?new) about price

policies. I believe they mentioned 15 centavos on one of the products. No progress was made in this respect. That is why the CGT's national leaders are meeting today to discuss the general course the dialogue is taking and so decide on a stand, which will be communicated in the next few hours to the rest of the trade union organizations. There's a meeting scheduled for tomorrow to evaluate the progress of this dialogue. [end recording]

Haiti

Officials Receive Japanese Agricultural Aid

FL2004225988 Port-au-Prince Radio Metropole in Creole 1600 GMT 20 Apr 88

[Excerpts] Today at noon the Japanese Government gave Haiti some agricultural materials. There are tractors, pickup trucks, and other tools used for agriculture. Our reporter is on the scene.

[Reporter] [Passage omitted] The Haitian Government was out in force to officially receive this Japanese Government gift from the Japanese charge d'affaires. Prime Minister Celestin, Foreign Minister Gerard Latortue, Information Minister Roger Savain, Cooperatives Minister Rene Laroche, and, of course, Agriculture Minister Gerard Philippe Auguste were all present at the ceremony.

Just part of the gift has arrived in Haiti: 20 tractors and 20 pickup trucks; the rest is yet to come. The total gift is worth some $4 million. [passage omitted]

Gunfire, Robberies Resume at Night in Capital

FL192225 Port-au-Prince Radio Metropole in French 1600 GMT 19 Apr 88

[Text] There has been a resumption of gunfire at night in Port-au-Prince. Firing has been intensive in certain neighborhoods. Residents of Bois Verna, Bourdon, and Delmas are complaining and feeling very anxious about the resumption of gunfire at night and about a fresh outbreak of armed robberies.

Stores and private residences have again become targets for armed individuals, who most of the time elude the police. Thus, on Sunday night, between 0130 and 0300, a team of thieves destroyed the iron grillwork on the shop "(Beau Cadeau)" in the Turgeau section of town.

Situation Among Peasants in Northwest 'Uneasy'

FL192109 Port-au-Prince Radio Metropole in Creole 1600 GMT 19 Apr 88

[Text] The northwest is uneasy. There's the risk of clashes between peasants who favor forming groups and peasants who are against it. You will remember that the peasants in the northwest have already suffered because of clashes in Jean-Rabel between peasants belonging to groups and other peasants who are against these groups. The clashes left more than 300 people dead.

Since it is now being reported that there is a risk of new clashes, the people in the northwest are calling for help because whenever there is any kind of gathering whatsoever, the gathering is assumed to be a peasants group. Thus, people are alarmed. We will listen to Michel Edouard, our correspondent in the northwest:

[Edouard] A number of peasants have gone into hiding in the La Coma and Dubois area, which made news in June 1987 and is still making news.

For the time being, there are three kinds of peasants groups in the area. The first group does not want peasants forming groups and assembling. These peasants think the peasants who form groups are communists.

A second group in the area supports the peasants who do not want other peasants to form groups.

A third group of peasants feels they must get together and form groups so they can discuss the area's problems. They feel this is the only way they can overcome underdevelopment.

When we went to the La Coma and Dubois area on Monday, 18 April, these peasants told us that they were persecuted every time they gathered to discuss the area's problems; they felt that meeting is the way to find a solution to them. For this reason, many of them have had to go into hiding, they said.

They added that the meeting they held during Holy Week caused them lots of problems, because the [communal] section chief sent them a summons. Also, on 8 April, some 125 of them had assembled to discuss roads and the possibility of fixing one of the roads in the area. Many of them have since had to flee.

One of these peasants, who is a catechism director, reported that he was expelled from the church because he is willing to meet with the peasants. He allowed that he is having problems. He spoke of section chief (St Amand Francois), from the first communal section of Jean-Rabel, who is giving them a big hassle. This (Francois) issued a warrant stating that they should be taken no matter how and treated harshly if they resist. This has forced them all to flee. They say that the section chief is acting under orders from Commander (Francois Richardson).

One of the peasants made statements to us, to show how badly they want to assemble:

[Begin speaker recording] [Words indistinct] first of all, all the suffering we have been experiencing for a long time. We are now asking to be given some peace, because if we can't have peace in the area, we will always have

problems. If we small farmers are not allowed to assemble, if the authorities always disperse us, we would like to know: Who is going to really change our area? Is someone from somewhere else going to come and (?work on our farms)? [end recording]

That is what one of the peasants told us. Their hopes lie in their getting together. They said the peasants from (Mahotiere) encountered problems on 29 March, when they were marched to Port-de-Paix, and that today it is they who are having problems, with section chief (St Amand Francois).

St Lucia

Unions Refuse To Participate in OECS Talks

FL192355 Bridgetown CANA in English 1212 GMT 16 Apr 88

[Text] Castries, St. Lucia, April 16, CANA—A section of the labour movement here has refused to participate in discussions about proposals for a political union of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), accusing government of withholding information about its plans from the trade unions and the people.

The Industrial Solidarity Pact (ISP), which groups the island's public sector labour unions, said that Prime Minister John Compton, one of the leading proponents of the political union idea, has failed to reply to a letter from the ISP for details about the proposals.

ISP Chairman David Demacque said that government needed to set out its position in detail to the unions and other mass organizations before meaningful discussion on the issues involved can take place.

...Government has chosen to hide behind a group calling itself the Independent Committee for OECS Unity which cannot, in our view, represent the views of the politicians who are the initiators of the OECS union idea, he added.

Compton and St. Vincent and the Grenadines Prime Minister James Mitchell are the principal figures behind the current initiative towards a political union of the seven-island OECS.

Antigua and Barbuda has expressed some strong reservations about the idea, but the government in St. John's has not altogether closed the door on its eventual participation.

Demacque said on Friday that the trade unions cannot go to their membership to discuss a vague, unclear political union that the government itself is unwilling to discuss.

...the fact that the government is unwilling to discuss its own brainchild raises a number of questions, he added.

The unions said the so-called independent committee has not sought to encourage government to discuss the issue with the mass organisations of the country, but, instead, has adopted a non-independent, partisan, political position.

Mexico

Salinas Warns of U.S. 'Intervenionist Actions'

PA2004153288 Mexico City XEW Television Network in Spanish 1300 GMT 20 Apr 88

[Report by Guillermo Ortega Ruiz; passages within quotation marks recorded]

[Text] In Mexicali, a few meters from the border between Mexico and the United States, PRI presidential candidate Carlos Salinas de Gortari has made a call of alert in view of the possibility of new interventionist actions:

"I ask all Mexicans to be on alert during the next few months because these interventionist threats may increase."

The PRI candidate said the U.S. Senate's attempts to dictate rules of conduct to our country is inadmissible. Salinas added that Mexico will continue its strong fight against drug trafficking, because it is advisable for our national security.

In Baja California, Carlos Salinas de Gortari initiated a new tour that has challenges as its theme. On this occasion, the challenge of democracy and decentralization are being discussed. In the first of the meetings on this topic that will be held in four different parts of the country this week, the PRI candidate said there would never be justice in Mexico without democracy. He talked about what democracy means for him:

"We believe democracy is a means to increase participation, to accept plurality, to respect criticisms and discrepancies, to know the truth, and to accept it no matter how harsh it may be—thereby avoiding the isolation of the followers [cortesanos]."

Carlos Salinas de Gortari spoke of a new generation that is not afraid of democracy:

"That is why my generation, which is not composed of ages but of attitudes, believes in democracy and is identified with democracy. My generation has made commitments with democracy, because it is the means to know and to make the people's will become a reality. These are the new feelings of the nation."

Carlos Salinas de Gortari will travel today to the city of Guadalajara, where discussions on the challenge of democracy will continue.

Pemex Increases Oil Prices for European Market

FL2104014388 Mexico City NOTIMEX in Spanish 2121 GMT 20 Apr 88

[Text] Mexico City, 20 Apr (NOTIMEX)—Pemex has reported that the Foreign Oil Trade Committee decided to raise the price of a barrel of Maya type crude sold in the European Continent by 20 cents.

The Mexican parastatal added that this increase will be in effect beginning 1 May. It also indicated that the price of the light Isthmus type which is sold in Europe and America did not change; however, it noted that prices for the Far East will be set at the beginning of May.

On another matter, Pemex reported that it exported 260,000 barrels a day of Maya crude to Europe. This region received 20 percent of the total Mexican oil production.

Israeli Minister Arrives for 2-Day Visit

FL160325 Mexico City NOTIMEX in Spanish 2256 GMT 14 Apr 88

[Text] Mexico City, 14 Apr (NOTIMEX)—The economic solidarity pact is similar to the anti-inflation program in Israel, which was successful because of the cooperation of the people, said Moshe Shahal, Israel's minister of energy and infrastructure.

Interviewed upon his arrival in Mexico after visiting Brazil, Shahal reported that during his 2-day visit he will meet with Fernando Hiriart Valderrama and Hector Hernandez Cervantes, Mexican secretaries of energy, mines, and parastate industry; and commerce and industrial development, respectively. Shalal also met with Joaquin Carreon, director of the Federal Commission of Electricity, and Francisco Rojas, director of Pemex.

The Israeli minister, who will be received today by President Miguel de la Madrid, noted that trade between the two countries may be increased

Shahal said he will hold a news conference tomorrow during which he will give the results of his visit, including the agreements reached.

The Israeli official was welcomed at the Mexico City international airport by Alberto Escofet Artigas, under secretary of mines and basic industry.

Foreign Secretary Sepulveda Amor Visits Spain

For Spanish reportage on the visit of Foreign Secretary Bernando Sepulveda Amor, including talks with Spanish King Juan Carlos and Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez, see the Spain section of the 20 April West Europe DAILY REPORT and subsequent issues.

Belize

TV Stations Ordered To Not Show Program

FL2004210088 Bridgetown CANA in English 1751 GMT 20 Apr 88

[Text] Belmopan, Belize, April 20, CANA—The government-appointed Belize Broadcasting Authority has ordered the country's nine television stations to stop showing a programme featuring a former government minister and a journalist.

The first and only programme aired so far featured Assad Shoman, a former health minister in the Peoples United Party Administration, who criticised the current government, and the editor of a small local newspaper, UHURU NEWS, Odinga Lumumba.

The authority in a letter to the show's executive producer, Stewart Krown, said the broadcast of the programme was contrary to the Broadcasting Regulations Act which prohibits party political broadcasts without the approval of the authority.

Krohn said he would take legal action against the authority.

"This is a bad law to begin with, and they have gone beyond the intent of the law. The interview has nothing to do with partisan politics," he said.

In the programme, Shoman said that while it took the Peoples United Party 20 years to become arrogant, it had taken the United Democratic Party government 20 months. He also said that even seven years after independence has been achieved, and with the rejection of the 1981 heads of agreement, Belize has not moved any closer to a settlement with Guatemala" in their territorial dispute. [quotation mark as received]

Both Shoman and Lumumba were key protagonists in the 1981 heads of agreement which was to set the stage for a negotiated settlement with Guatemala.

Shoman who at the time headed the Belize Independence Secretariat played a key role in the drafting of the heads of agreement.

Lumumba was a leading figure in the opposition United Democratic Party which opposed the heads of agreement proposals which resulted in civil disturbances in March of 1981, six months before Belize achieved its independence.

Neither Shoman nor Lumumba are any longer affilated to political parties in Belize. Shoman, who is a lawyer, heads the Office of SPEAR—The Society for the Propagation of Education and Research.

Belize's Ambassador to the United States Edward Laing is currently in Belmopan for talks with Foreign Ministry officials to prepare for a next round of talks with Guatemalan officials, informed sources said.

Costa Rica

Arias on Talks With Spain's Gonzalez, L.A. Debt

PM210901 Barcelona LA VANGUARDIA in Spanish 3 Apr 88 p 11

[Jose Maria Brunet dispatch: "Arias Asked for Gonzalez' Help in Renegotiating Latin American Debt"]

[Excerpt] San Jose, Costa Rica—Costa Rican President Oscar Arias asked [Spanish Prime Minister] Felipe Gonzalez for the Spanish authorities' support for his efforts to renegotiate the Latin American countries' foreign debt, and especially that of Costa Rica. Bilateral relations occupied a prominent place in the meetings held by Arias and Gonzalez, although the key issue was an analysis of the Central American conflicts.

Nevertheless, in a conversation with LA VANGUARDIA at the presidential palace in San Jose, President Arias explained the enormous importance to his country of this previously undisclosed topic in his talks with Felipe Gonzalez. The Costa Rican president also highlighted the role Spain has played as a champion of his proposals with respect to the EEC countries.

"In the Spanish Government," Arias said, "we have found a spokesman, an advocate, a champion of Costa Rica's peace proposal. The role played by Spain within the EEC has been very, very important. In addition, I have asked Felipe Gonzalez to help us in the Paris Club. For Latin America the main obstacle to development is the foreign debt. For Central America the main obstacle is war. There will be no development as long as the war continues. Peace is an essential prerequisite if we wish to improve the Central American people's living standard. And the best example is Costa Rica. The countries which are at war become poorer daily."

"For us," the Costa Rican president said, "the main obstacle to economic recovery is the $4 billion foreign debt, and the bilateral debt is $1 billion. I told Felipe that we wish to make an approach to the Paris Club and asked Spain to assist us. I believe that the Spanish prime minister has sufficient prestige and leadership, and I hope that the other EEC countries will listen to him. Our debt to Spain is $70 million, but the bilateral debt which will be negotiated at the Paris Club is what I said, and unless we secure much better terms for repayment.... Costa Rica will honor its commitments, but we need time. If there is a desire to help us, the best way to do so is to affect a long-term rescheduling of our debt to the member countries, with a few years' remission."

Oscar Arias referred to the solidarity with Costa Rica displayed by the EEC countries. Nevertheless, he asserted: "If there is a desire to help Central America, instead of meeting in Hamburg and deciding to give us a certain sum of money, a much more effective and rapid way to help us is to grant us better terms for the repayment of our debt and a repayment respite for several years.

Otherwise, it is very unlikely that these economies can recover, unless they are freed from the enormous burden of devoting 7 or 8 percent of GDP just to paying interest."

In Oscar Arias' opinion, the above-mentioned renegotiation is extremely important. "I am doing," he said, "the things that we must do in the economic sphere in order to have sustained growth in the future of 5, 6, or 7 percent in real terms, permanently. And Costa Rica will very soon be one of the most prosperous countries in the whole of Latin America. We have set three aims for ourselves: To keep our children free from war we have had no army for 40 years; and there is no country in the world more civilianized than Costa Rica. Another aim is to keep our children free from drugs, and to this end we have just approved draconian legislation against drug trafficking. And third, another aim I am pursuing is to give everybody housing and to eradicate the slums completely."

A peculiarity of Costa Rica's economy is that it has no defense expenditure, for the simple reason that it has no army. The Pacific bay where the meeting between Gonzalez, Arias, and former Latin American Presidents Carlos Andres Perez (Venezuela) and Daniel Oduber (Costa Rica) took place was guarded by a single patrol boat, which represented a third of the country's naval forces. In fact the Costa Rican Navy comprises just three patrol boats, which perform police rather than defense duties.

"It must be said," Arias asserted, "that other peoples in Latin America or worldwide have not had the wisdom, vision, and courage of Jose Figueres, our president on three occasions, who abolished the army in 1948 after winning a civil war. I believe that it is very wishful thinking today to ask a leader to abolish the armies in Latin America, but the least that we can ask of the military is that they respect civil power. Their place is in the barracks and never in the presidential palace. Governments must result from the majority's wishes freely expressed at the polls. Latin America's history is the history of the constant thwarting of those wishes by small oligarchies or else by the military, sometimes on their own and sometimes together—almost always together. At least, that is the sad story in Central America: Privileged groups that never wanted to surrender their privileges, and so they always found an ally in the generals. And hence the guerrilla warfare, hence the conflict, hence the fact that today we in Central America are experiencing war." [passage omitted]

National Union Party Condemns Bombing

PA2004201288 San Jose Radio Impacto in Spanish 1859 GMT 20 Apr 88

[Communique issued by the National Union Party on 20 April; read by party president Olga Marta Ulate—live or recorded]

[Text] 1. The president of the national executive committee of the National Union Party strongly condemns the terrorist act perpetrated yesterday at the Costa Rican-U.S. Cultural Center, which left five people seriously injured, most of them Costa Ricans, and which endangered the lives of the children at the Anglo-American School.

2. We denounce this criminal, terrorist act to the world. It was planned against our youth and carried out by criminal groups promoted by international communism.

3. Just as last week's terrorist attack on the U.S. Embassy in Honduras was undoubtedly sponsored by international communism, today those same Marxist groups attack our institutions.

4. We call on all Central American governments to be on the alert in view of the terrorist acts supported by area Marxists.

5. We make a special call to national public opinion and the democratic conscience of all Costa Ricans to support us in this struggle we have been waging. We have been constantly denouncing communism so we do not regret tomorrow what we could have avoided today.

El Salvador

Ochoa Clarifies Previous Remarks on Military

PA2004162088 San Salvador Canal Doce Television in Spanish 0300 GMT 20 Apr 88

[Report by Alfredo Villareal]

[Text] In an exclusive interview in a hotel in the city of San Miguel, Colonel Sigifredo Ochoa Perez emphatically said he has never called for armed insurrection against the conduct of the Armed Forces in the country's current political-military situation. He said that on the contrary, his remarks have been specifically against the position adopted by Defense Minister General Carlos Eugenio Vides Casanova, who has politically been leading the institution in a way that is not nationalist. He also asked the high-ranking military chief to accept Ochoa's stance, because, according to him, this is part of the democratization process.

[Begin recording] [Ochoa] At no time have I issued a call for an insurrection against the Armed Forces. I have always said that the armed institution has been like a mother who raised and educated me. I will always struggle to defend it. Nevertheless, I must clarify that it is one thing to criticize the political-military leadership of the armed institution, and it is another thing to say I am criticizing the institution. This must be clearly stated. On this occasion, I also want to state that as a public official, the defense minister must accept criticism. The world knows perfectly well what is going on. I have been in the Army; I am a professional soldier; and I see things with a military eye. Now that I am in politics, I also view things from a political perspective. We do not want the Armed Forces' hands to be tied or constrained. I must tell you that there are towns at the mercy of the FMLN

terrorists, and we are not going to be exposing our people to events such as what occurred in San Isidro, Morazan Department, where one of our mayors-elect was executed in broad daylight.

[Reporter] What is your opinion of the political leadership of the defense minister, specifically the criticism [words indistinct]?

[Ochoa] The truth is that I [words indistinct] further discuss this matter. I do want to issue a call to the institution, so my remarks will not be distorted; I have been and always will be a defender of the institution. However, I disagree with the views on the leadership of the war; the minister, who is responsible, should accept this and do everything possible to correct matters. I think we live in a country in which the democratic process is being strengthened and in which freedom should exist. There should be freedom and courage to state things. I know that these things sometimes hurt, but it is better to say things openly. I am not acting surreptitiously; instead, I am acting openly as a citizen should. [end recording]

The retired colonel also said that ARENA [Nationalist Republican Alliance] is willing to participate in the new elections that will be held in the strife-torn towns in eastern El Salvador if they are protected by the Army. On 22 March this was generally not possible because of guerrilla attacks in locations such as San Gerardo and Meanguera. Ochoa said he fears for the security of his people.

Nicaragua

Ortega on U.S. Opposition to Peace Efforts

PA2004214788 Managua Domestic Service in Spanish 1611 GMT 20 Apr 88

[Speech by President Daniel Ortega at opening of Regional International Organization for Agricultural-Livestock Health (OIRSA) conference at the Cesar Augusto Silva Convention Center in Managua—live]

[Text] The ministers and directors of organizations representing Central American and Caribbean countries who are here this morning in Nicaragua inaugurating this meeting will once again discuss a subject of far-reaching importance for the present and the future of our peoples.

You know very well the role that agriculture has played throughout the history of our countries and the negative effects caused by incorrect policies regarding agricultural development and a lack of knowledge about our own agricultural potential. This not only affects the production of agriculture to feed the people and to provide exports, but causes a lack of stability, justice, freedom, and democracy.

One cannot understand democracy without justice and freedom. And one cannot understand justice and freedom without the right of the peasants, the right of the men who till the land, without the right of the peoples to rationally exploit these resources. Peace is an indispensable element to effectively draft the plans that lead to our countries' economic development. Peace does not depend solely on our desire, on the desire of Central Americans, on the desire of the peoples and governments of Latin America and the Caribbean. It does not depend solely on the desire of the developing countries. It also depends on the desire of the developed and highly industrialized countries, and those with [words indistinct] economies.

We are facing an unjust international economic system, which suppresses the demands of those peoples, the demands of the governments of the Latin American and Caribbean countries, the developing countries, the countries of the so-called Third World.

We are facing the strength of the powerful who have atomic arsenals, a financial arsenal, and who refuse to support the [words indistinct] development of other peoples, and who aspire to maintain and support the unjust economic system, which maintains stability for its own interests, which maintains its own stability (?at the cost of the instability) of the developing countries; that is, stability by subjugation to slavery. [twenty-second break in reception] However, it was an artificial instability, fragile and unjust because it denied justice and denied freedom, because it was an instability maintained at the cost of exploitation of man by man.

Now there are those who try to maintain stability in the world at the cost of exploiting the highly developed countries, with marketing economies, industrialized, exploiting other countries, simply and plainly the developing countries, denying them the possibility of developing and creating in our countries economic tensions and consequently social tensions, political tensions, tensions of every kind. [sentence as heard]

Latin America and the Caribbean have agreed that it is necessary to join efforts and struggle for a truly just new economic order that allows our countries' development and truly generates stability in our societies. However, Latin America and the Caribbean continue to face the resistance of those who do not accept these proposals and those who choose the road that seems easier—that of maintaining the current unjust economic order.

We have achieved progress because we have assumed increasingly clear and specific positions. We have also achieved progress because we now value the importance of strengthening interregional mechanisms. If those who have the opportunity to help us to attain an effective, dynamic, and just economy do not do so, we cannot remain idle waiting until those people realize they must do so. Our peoples continue to exert pressure every day, demanding profound changes to develop our economies.

We have immense human resources in our countries, and we have equally immense natural resources. If we all join efforts to attain interregional integration and cooperation, we will then be able to achieve more than we have achieved so far.

Our people have progressively opened political and democratic opportunities in Latin America, hoping that we will resolve our economic problems. We all know that a democratic opening, politically speaking, is not enough if no specific actions are carried out in the economic, justice, and freedom sectors. Likewise, no one doubts that South and Central American countries suffered a military occupation some years ago. Those democratic openings have been made; the governments are willing to sponsor development in their respective countries; and changes are taking place (?despite) U.S. imperialism's political desires and its refusal to accept the fact that Latin America is a region where people can think, talk, and act independently.

A deep crisis now exists in Latin America and the Caribbean as never before in the last 90 years, according to statements made at the Latin American and Caribbean ministers meeting in Ottawa. The crisis is not the result of a lack of commitment by the Latin American people and governments. It has occurred because our peoples have been denied the possibility of being independent from those who try to deny them the right to self-determination and sovereignty.

Nicaragua has been waging battles in which we have recognized the efforts made by the Central American presidents, who, in an act of independence against U.S. policy on 7 August 1987 decided to work for an effective peace in Central America within the framework of respect for our peoples' self-determination, independence, and sovereignty.

The sovereign will of the Central American people has been questioned by the U.S. President, who believes the Esquipulas agreement is not a good one. Good or bad, the Esquipulas agreement was signed by the Central American people, and it should be respected by the U.S. Government.

When we met in Guatemala to sign this agreement, at no time did the Central American presidents ever think of consulting the U.S. Government about the Esquipulas agreement. No Central American president thought of submitting the document we signed for consideration by the U.S. Government, the U.S. President, or the U.S. Congress.

It was the Central American presidents' sovereign, independent decision, which should be respected by the U.S. President. The United States has the right to give its opinions, but it has no right to hinder the implementation of the peace plan signed by the Central American presidents. That is where the problem lies: The U.S. leaders can very well say that the agreement is a good one or that the agreement is a bad one, but they have no right to exert pressure and take actions to kill the Esquipulas peace process.

In compliance with the Esquipulas agreements, a new meeting with the counterrevolutionary Directorate recently ended here in Managua. It must also be pointed out that the agreements signed in Sapoa on 23 March were signed by that counterrevolutionary Directorate, which was created by the U.S. Government and which has been an instrument of U.S. policy. The moment that it signed the Sapoa agreements, the counterrevolutionary Directorate took a position independent of the U.S. rulers. At that moment, they brought national interests to the forefront and rejected the dependence that up to that time they had had on the U.S. rulers.

A few days ago, we concluded a new meeting with the contra Directorate amid great pressures and obstacles, because the U.S. Government has been hindering and sabotaging the implementation of the Esquipulas peace plan. The agreements Nicaragua signed in Sapoa on 23 March—and these meetings are clear evidence of the implementation of the peace plan—have logically not pleased the U.S. rulers who, using their agents within the armed counterrevolution and using their agents in the unarmed counterrevolution, are trying to boycott and sabotage the implementation of these agreements.

In a clear act of flagrant disrespect and violation of the sovereignty and independence of the Nicaraguan Government and the independent position adopted by the Directorate in signing the Sapoa agreements, the U.S. rulers made their opinion known and acted accordingly. They said that they had studied the document. General Powell said that he and his specialists had studied the Sapoa document and that it did not satisfy them because it had too many holes. When this agreement was signed by the Nicaraguan Government and the Directorate, at no time did the Directorate tell the Nicaraguan Government that these agreements first had to be examined by the U.S. rulers or that they had to be ratified by the U.S. rulers before being implemented. We recognize that the Directorate assumed a position independent from the U.S. rulers. It assumed a patriotic attitude. However, because the U.S. rulers' view has been clearly expressed and because the U.S. Government wants to destroy the Nicaraguan revolution and to disregard all the agreements achieved for peace in Central America, the implementation of the Sapoa agreements is extremely important.

A new meeting has been scheduled. We met on 15, 16, 17, and 18 April and declared a permanent session; we could say that we declared a 10-day recess. The meeting is expected to be resumed in Managua on 28, 29, and 30 April to reach definitive agreements.

However, we are facing a struggle between the willingness of the Nicaraguan Government and the contra Directorate, which signed the Sapoa agreements, and the willingness of U.S. leaders, who seek to kill the Sapoa agreements. One of its members, namely Enrique Bermudez, the military chief of the counterrevolutionary forces and a former colonel in the Somozist National Guard, clearly said that he does not recognize the Sapoa agreements.

Of course, although Bermudez is the military chief, his attitudes and positions will not determine the future of peace, which is demanded by the Nicaraguan people. If the contra Directorate has enough strength and energy to sign an agreement leading to a definitive cease-fire—its implementation and a timetable—a victory of peace will then be secured in political terms, even though executioner guardsmen continue to use their arms to shed blood in our fatherland.

This is a great challenge. We presented an implementation proposal to ensure compliance with the Sapoa agreements. Our implementation proposal contemplates the definition of areas where counterrevolutionary forces would be installed, a modus operandi to channel humanitarian aid to them, verification, disarmament before an international organization, reintegration of all these people into Nicaraguan society, participation in the national dialogue, and the release of prisoners. In sum, we presented a proposal to ensure full compliance with the Sapoa agreements. We will wait and see what will happen at the upcoming meeting in Managua. We harbor the hope that the contra Directorate will act independently and patriotically.

We demand that the U.S. Government respect and abstain from tampering with the implemention of the Sapoa agreements. We are forced to say this although we know our words are not being heard and will hardly be heard, because AID—in flagrant violation not only of the Sapoa agreements but of a law of the U.S. Congress, which approved the humanitarian aid—is delivering part of that humanitarian aid to counterrevolutionary forces in Honduras.

We know the Honduran Government—and the Honduran president said this during the meetings we held in Guatemala and Costa Rica—does not approve of the war or of the counterrevolutionary forces using Honduran territory. But the truth is that the United States has imposed this situation on them, thus hindering the Esquipulas agreements and the implementation of the Sapoa agreements. We will, of course, report to the OAS secretary general and Cardinal Obando y Bravo, both witnesses to these talks, and to the Verification Commission, also a witness to these talks, that the Sapoa agreements are being violated.

AID violated the Sapoa agreements when it delivered the aid approved by the U.S. Congress to the contras in Honduras. The U.S. Congress did not authorize AID to take this step while the Nicaraguan Government and the contras are involved in negotiations to reach an agreement.

Furthermore, this AID action harms the Honduran Government, because it confirms the presence of the mercenary forces in Honduran territory. We are worried about Honduras; we are worried because this situation affects relations among states and affects the principle of nonintervention. We trust the Honduran Government will stop and think about this situation. The best contribution Honduras could make to the Central American peace efforts—and to help improve its relations with Nicaragua—would be to expel the mercenary forces from its territory and ban the presence of these forces in Honduran territory. Honduras should not allow AID to use that country to deliver aid to the contras; it should not allow AID to deliver food and other products to the contras based in Honduras. If Honduras allows this, it would be giving a force that is undermining law and order—a force that is attacking a neighboring country, Nicaragua—a legal status. This is not in accordance with what the Central American presidents signed in Esquipulas, and it is not in accordance with the Sapoa agreements.

In speaking about the struggle for peace that we Nicaraguans are waging, a struggle for peace also waged by the other Central American, Latin American, and Caribbean nations, I want to acknowledge, once again, the extraordinary role that Latin America has played throughout the years. The Contadora and Support Groups have played a highly significant part in this struggle. Four Latin American countries—Mexico, Panama, Colombia, and Venezuela—in the first group, and four other Latin American countries—Peru, Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil—have all strengthened this Latin American, Bolivarian impetus for independence and self-determination.

It is clear enough that struggling for a peaceful solution in Central America and struggling for the principle of self-determination in Central America and Nicaragua is equivalent to struggling for a collective, Latin American interest. What happens in Nicaragua at this historic moment will have consequences for the future of Latin America. Should imperialist policy destroy the Nicaraguan revolution, it would be a blow against the struggle that the Latin American and Caribbean peoples have been waging.

We are convinced, however, that historic events, such as the one that has taken place in Nicaragua, are irreversible. Latin America's history itself has shown this to be true through its profound, revolutionary changes. The battle for America has been hard. Much blood has been shed to achieve independence. The battle for America to make openings for democracy, freedom, justice, and general peace has been hard. We have passed through

difficult, tragic moments when our peoples' blood overflowed our continent. Yet history can never be reversed. Otherwise it would cease to be history, and we would have to use a different word to define social and political phenomena.

We are sure that through this battle that the Nicaraguan people have been waging, that the peasants have been waging in their determination to make the land productive, through this battle in which we have been joined by the Latin American and Caribbean peoples, through this battle in which there is a Latin American awareness among the governments of our region—a battle we have already won—we Nicaraguans will, sooner rather than later, establish true conditions to stabilize our homeland, economy, and agricultural production, to develop the cattle industry, to make our people happier and healthier, and to strengthen democracy in Nicaragua.

From this land of peasants, of artisans, of workers, of intellectuals, of men eager to move forward, despite the possible political and ideological disagreements—which should also occur—we tell everybody: Welcome, and may you be successful in your work. Thank you very much. [applause]

Ortega Disavows Radio's Obando y Bravo Remarks
PA2104034288 Managua Domestic Service in Spanish 0052 GMT 21 Apr 88

[Communique No 34 issued by the Press and Information Directorate of the Presidency in Managua on 20 April]

[Text] The Press and Information Directorate of the Presidency reports Minister of the Presidency Rene Nunez Tellez today sent the following message to His Eminence Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo:

In response to your telegram dated 19 April 1988, I wish to state that the president does not share the views expressed in one of Radio Sandino's programs on Tuesday morning. I reiterate that Radio Sandino is not the official voice of the Nicaraguan Government.

In making this announcement, the Presidential Press and Information Directorate is certain that the opinions voiced in several Radio Catolica programs which insulted and showed disrespect for the president do not reflect the beliefs of the Episcopal Conference of Nicaragua or of His Eminence Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo, because we are convinced that all of them favor peace in Nicaragua.

Managua, 12 April 1988

For a dignified peace, free fatherland or death.

Radio Station Denies Insulting Obando y Bravo
PA2004192888 Managua Domestic Service in Spanish 2015 GMT 20 Apr 88

[Text] Comrade Carlos Jose Guadamuz Portillo, director general of La Voz de Nicaragua, has protested through this news media reports published yesterday in LA PRENSA that this radio station offended and insulted His Eminence Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo.

Comrade Guadamuz clarified to Cardinal Obando y Bravo and to our people that at no time has La Voz de Nicaragua offended and insulted his eminence, as this station acts in accordance with the current political situation.

Guadamuz added that in addition to the respect that Cardinal Obando y Bravo deserves as the Catholic Church's religious leader, he is one of the main actors in the peace talks currently taking place in the country.

Meanwhile, Cardinal Obando y Bravo clarified that another radio station, and not La Voz de Nicaragua, offended him. His Eminence thanked Comrade Guadamuz for his explanations and reiterated his interest in continuing to witness the peace talks in Nicaragua.

LA PRENSA Criticizes FSLN on Peace Talks
PA2004172888 Managua LA PRENSA in Spanish 18 Apr 88 p 2

[Editorial]

[Text] The talks being held between the Sandinists and the insurgents at the Camino Real Hotel since Friday bogged down just when expected.

The government has been demanding that the armed rebels sign a communique declaring that the sole objective of the talks is to achieve peace, their security, and their provisioning. The Resistance has refused, alleging that the democratization of the political institutions is just as important as peace and that this must be expressed clearly. Consequently, the insurgents are demanding specific dates for both processes.

At this stage, it is evident that the government's goal is to get the Resistance off its back by confining it in enclaves, while the democratization process continues dragging its feet.

How could one believe the FSLN's promise that democratization will be dealt with in the national dialogue if the 20 sessions held so far have produced nothing?

Disagreement increases each day among the participants in the talks because nothing substantial is achieved and the exchanges last indefinitely. How could the insurgents be interested in a request that continues to lead nowhere?

LA PRENSA, which has always supported peace efforts, has insisted that this basic aspect is one of the facets of our reality. Another is the dismantling of the totalitarian machinery that the FSLN has engraved in the Constitution, without which the irritating thorn stimulated by the armed resistance would persist.

Therefore, if the government wishes, as all Nicaraguans do, to establish the basis for the country's pacification, it should proceed with diligence to make the constitutional reforms that have insistently been demanded by the 14 political opposition parties. Let us not continue wasting time.

Vice President Ramirez Visits Spain

For Spanish coverage of the visit of Vice President Sergio Ramirez to Spain, including his meetings with Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez, see the Spain section of the 20 April West Europe DAILY REPORT and subsuquent issues.

Panama

Legislative Assembly Lifts State of Emergency

PA2104004588 Panama City Televisora Nacional in Spanish 0028 GMT 21 Apr 88

[Text] A few minutes ago the Legislative Assembly voted to lift the national state of emergency established by executive decree [illegible] March.

The legislative resolution was approved on recommendation of the Assembly's Government and Justice and Constitutional Affairs Committees.

Yesterday Manuel Solis Palma, minister in charge of the Presidency, sent a letter to the Assembly asking that the state of emergency be lifted.

The resolution states that this decision was made in view of the fact that the Panamanian people have acted with prudence and a sense of responsibility.

Solis Palma on Relations with U.S., Dialogue

PA2104005288 Panama City Telemetro Television in Spanish 2320 GMT 20 Apr 88

[Interview with Manuel Solis Palma, minister in charge of the Presidency, by unidentified reporter; date, place not given—recorded]

[Text] [Solis] There is no chance for a break, because the United States does not recognize the government that I head. They continue to recognize another government. Therefore, under these circumstances, they have no relations with the government; they have been broken.

[Reporter] Mr President, Archbishop Msgr McGrath stated that you held a conversation during which you discussed the possible alternatives for the national dialogue to continue. However, despite these statements, [words indistinct] whom should we believe, you or the archbishop?

[Solis] First of all, I never said that we had discussed the problem of General Noriega's departure. The only thing said was at the negotiating table, because we do not accept prior conditions because that is absurd. [sentence as heard] If the person to negotiate the points to be negotiated is Commander Noriega, then if we take him out of the scene, then what are we negotiating? They [not further identified] had better call on us to sign a surrender instead of an agreement, which are two totally different things. What we have said is that we agree that the case of Commander Noriega should be discussed at the negotiating table and that we can also discuss the legitimacy of the government and any other topic. All that can be discussed.

What we do not accept, and I made it very clear, is that at the discussions they [not further identified] come out and say that this point should be raised, and then when the first point is resolved, then we will continue with the second point. No. We will discuss all the points. When we all agree, then we can begin to fulfill the points agreed upon. The points are discussed separately, but they are acted upon in conjunction. I said that I set as an example the three-in-one treaties [as heard]. They are separate, but are in conjunction. That is our position. Furthermore, I added something that they always want to ignore, but I will not leave it out. We will only sit down with Panamanians who feel Panamanian, who act like Panamanians, and who have Panamanian feelings. I will not sit down with foreigners. And whoever lives in Panama and betrays his country is a foreigner to me.

[Reporter] Mr President, are you willing to engage in a dialogue?

[Solis] We are always willing. But we are not speaking specifically of whether or not Noriega leaves. We are saying that the topic of Gen Noriega may be brought up at the negotiating table, and the discussions that will take place will depend on whether the Noriega issue is brought up.

On Measures, Support

FL2004103588 Havana Tele-Rebelde Network in Spanish 1234 GMT 19 Apr 88

[Interview with Manuel Solis Palma, minister in charge of the Presidency, by "special Cuban correspondents;" date, place not given—recorded]

[Text] [Correspondent] Mr President, what immediate measures is the Panamanian Government planning to confront American economic aggression?

[Solis] The Panamanian Government has already taken measures to confront this aggression. We are going to do the same thing the Americans are doing. As they intensify their aggression, we will intensify our measures. So far, we have effected them through national activities. We have been able to establish a supply system. We have diversified checks. We have provided the people with the opportunity to obtain their basic consumer goods. This marking of time has been accompanied by a very heartfelt feeling of patriotism. In my view, that has been fundamental.

As time has gone by, we have been perfecting this supply system, this check circulation that has been institutionalized. We feel that the support that has begun to emerge in a more concrete way on the part of almost all the countries of the world will make it possible for us to find a solution to the Panamanian crisis with foreign assistance despite the pressures of the United States. I believe this is going to be one of the most important historic steps taken by one of the small countries of the world. We can demonstrate that aggression does not always work even when it comes from such a powerful country, when nations respond in a cooperative way, when they understand the injustice. I believe this will be another enormous lesson for the United States. As we said before, the United States is completely at a loss; it is confused because we have been able to resist for so long. I believe it will become even more confused because we are in an increasingly better position to confront the situation. We have adjusted to circumstances. Our people are giving the real response with the nobility they have always displayed, with nationalism, conviction, and national purpose. The United States cannot understand this.

[Correspondent] Mr President, Panama has asked for Latin American support. How do you assess this Latin American support for Panama?

[Solis] I feel the support Latin America has given us is very important. It has to a great extent prevented what we initially felt: isolation. However, though it is an important gesture, so far it has not translated into actual assistance. I said once that perhaps the fault is ours, because we have not known how to follow up on the SELA resolution, on the desire of the Latin American nations to support us, so that it will translate into concrete assistance, into resources that will truly help us face the growing aggression of the United States.

Aside from the fact that we have not come up with a way to approach these nations and ask for this help, there is also deep down a rather curious dichotomy. On the one hand, they condemn the aggression. On the other, they have doubts about the legitimacy of the government and they criticize the interference of the Defense Forces in the civilian administration of the government. This aspect is pulling them away from what in practice should be the real assistance. They are questioning a secondary problem and thus canceling out what they maintain as principle: non-intervention, self-determination, the right of a people to choose their own government, to resolve their own problems. They are at the same time saying: you should resolve your own problems, with which we agree. So, there is a contradiction here. If we are supposed to resolve our own problems, then allow us resolve our problems. However, they say at the same time: The Defense Forces' interference in civilian affairs is not acceptable to us. The democratic process must be intensified. Yet this is a democracy seen from their own perspective.

There is something else. Each one is viewing the situation in accordance with its own experience and reality. When one of the countries or one of the ruling parties has had a negative experience with the army, when its whole history has been one of fighting militarism, it superimposes its own reality on Panama's reality, which is not the same. When the armies of those countries hold a negative, reactionary position that is contrary to the democratic process, they transfer this perception to Panama. Our circumstances are not the same.

Therefore, these are things that we still have not been able to overcome.

It would seem as if they had internal problems that do not allow them to fully externalize points of principle they have been unable to back up in practice so far.

[Correspondent] Meanwhile, the Nonaligned Movement Coordinating Bureau has just come out at the United Nations in firm support of Panama against U.S. aggression. What is your opinion?

[Solis] I feel that, as in the case of SELA, it is an expression of a great, enormous moral support for us. In our struggle, the one that is becoming isolated is the United States. We began a bit isolated. Now, it is the United States that is being isolated. Practically the only country that fails to recognize this is the United States.

However, the contradictions persist. While the Third World countries, the nonaligned countries came out with these statements at the United Nations, for which we are deeply grateful, the ambassadors of some of those countries in Panama were pressuring the National Bank to give back all their money so they could transfer it to Colombia or elsewhere. Thus, we find there is a gap between words and actions. I have already told our ambassador to the United Nations to ask those countries what was happening with their ambassadors in Panama, because they were assuming a contradictory position. They were not giving us support; they were taking away that support. To start pressuring the National Bank in these circumstances, to demand the money they have deposited in the bank so they can transfer it elsewhere, is akin to helping tighten the noose the United States has placed around our neck.

[Correspondent] Mr President, how do you envision 12 noon on 31 December 1999?

[Solis] Look, if we are able to overcome the current crisis—and I believe we will—31 December 1999 will be one of the historic and glorious dates of Panama, America, and the free world. If for any reason—because of the lack of foreign aid, the lack of understanding of some Panamanians, the treason that some Panamanians are planning—there is no 31 December 1999, we would lose the fundamental battle for the dignity and sovereignty of Panama and for the dignity and sovereignty of all of Latin America. That is how we see it. We are therefore waging a decisive battle. Its outcome will determine what 31 December 1999 will be like.

[Correspondent] The last question is: What is Panama fighting for?

[Solis] To be a nation. To be a nation. [repeats himself] That is all. To remain a country with its own characteristics; with its own physiognomy, culture, history; with the right to be Panama and just Panama. That is what we are fighting for. We hope all Panamanians will understand as much. As I have said before and I have repeated, we can be either a nation or a colony. That is what's in the balance.

[Correspondent] Do you really believe that there will be an American military (?aggression) against Panama?

[Solis] Look, if we were dealing with normal people, my answer would be no. However, there have been so many of the U.S. President's decisions that are abnormal that I cannot tell you if I would doubt it. No one would have thought that the United States might attack Grenada. But when the interests of a U.S. sector is at stake, their reaction goes beyond any normal behavior and then you can no longer judge what they are going to do. I repeat: The behavior of a person who does not act correctly, who does not act like a normal human being, is very unpredictable. You can't tell if it's going to happen or not. If logic is to be used, it should not happen. You could then be sure. However, with Reagan as president, it is very difficult to predict what he is going to do. So, you can't be too careful in that respect.

[Correspondent] What would happen if this aggression takes place?

[Solis] I am certain that at least one sector of the Panamanian people would resist. We have an enormous disadvantage. Its might is right next door. It does not come from outside. It is close by. We have quislings inside Panama. That is so. We no longer know if it is going to be the Americans [words indistinct] who are going to attack, or if some Panamanians armed by the Americans are also going to take part. This would [words indistinct] within the Panamanians a great spirit of struggle; how certain sectors are training to defend their country, their homeland. This, of course, entails great resistance. However, I don't think we can predict what the final battle, the final result will be. What is certain is that the United States will be unable afterward to face the world. Even if it wins, it will be a Pyrrhic victory.

Meets SELA Leader

PA2004192388 Panama City MATUTINO in Spanish 20 Apr 88 pp 3, 8

[Text] Permanent SELA Secretary Carlos Perez del Castillo held a work meeting with President Manuel Solis Palma within the SELA's follow-up of Decision 271, approved by consensus by Latin American countries within SELA's framework, concerning the support those countries will offer Panama given the nation's current difficult situation.

Dr Perez del Castillo arrived in our country with a group of experts who, in coordination with the Panamanian Government, began to review money, financial, and commercial matters. By the end of this week, the Panamanian Government will have a better idea of what is needed so the SELA permanent secretary may contact other governments in the Latin American region and offer support to Panama as soon as possible.

During the meeting, Perez del Castillo talked about the great solidarity prevailing throughout Europe, particularly in Sweden and Norway, with Latin America's decision to reject the implementation of coercive measures against the Panamanian Government and people.

The meeting was attended by Presidency Minister Nander Pitty Velasquez, Ricaurte Vasquez, planning and economic policy minister, Panamanian ambassador to Venezuela Marcel Salamin, and Raul Maldonado of SELA.

On Democracy

PA2104021888 Panama City Domestic Service in Spanish 1533 GMT 20 Apr 88

[Speech by Manuel Solis Palma, minister in charge of the Presidency, at the opening of the Regional Labor and Social Welfare Office in San Miguelito District, Panama City—live]

[Text] Mr Labor Minister; Ana Villa, director of the National Lottery; Madam Mayor of San Miguelito; Honorable Legislator; Mr Deputy Labor Minister; authorities; gentlemen of the press, radio, and television; gentlemen all:

I truly believe that this is a wonderful opportunity to express a few thoughts. When I assumed the presidency of the Republic as the minister in charge of the executive office, I knew exactly what difficulties I would face, I knew it would not be an easy job, and I also knew—perhaps not exactly—the Panamanian peoples' capabilities and their understanding, especially that of the popular sectors.

I decided to come here today, on the occasion of the first event I have presided over outside the office of the Presidency, to San Miguelito to be more precise, because when I took charge of the Presidency I promised to create a general state council here in San Miguelito. I have since created many broadened cabinet councils, but I have not yet created a general council, and I want to keep my word that the first one will be created here in San Miguelito. [applause]

I sincerely regret that the problems I must resolve on a daily basis and the struggle to maintain the Republic's dignity and sovereignty keep me busy most of the day and night at the Presidency. I had hoped and still hope to visit the local communities at some time. I want to visit the various sectors that are suffering from a lack of food, adequate housing, and the basic means for a decent survival. However, I believe I will soon be able to do this, because everyday we move closer to the Republic of Panama's consolidation, thanks to the efforts of many public officials, and thanks also to the popular sectors' understanding and high level of sacrifice they are making to save the nation. I reiterate this is especially true of the popular sectors.

We have been accused of not having a total democracy in Panama. We have been criticized for having some newspapers and a few radio stations—very few of them, for sure—closed; the situation is viewed as a violation, a negation of democratic principles. I believe democracy is divided into two aspects: real, in-depth democracy, and formal democracy. I believe the two principles should be respected. Nevertheless, if both cannot be respected, it is our duty to respect the first, the part that constitutes real democracy. There can be no democracy in any country in the world—even when the communications media are opened—after the media have been closed for disrespecting the fatherland's dignity and majesty, for making attempts against the nationality, against the Panamanian nationality. [sentence as heard] The media were not closed on a whim, but because of insubordination and a lack of good citizenship and patriotism on the part of the media or some of the closed media. I hope they will change their course; then we will be able to discuss freedom of expression.

It is said that we deny human rights. This is not true. Whose human rights have been violated here? I remember that Mauro Murillo [secretary general of the Union of Workers of the National Institute of Telecommunications] once said: I am pleased and happy today because I saw a man from the upper, the privileged classes—that is, with regard to fortunes—being arrested; some years ago, when someone had to be arrested it was a laborer, a member of the popular classes. Now the wealthy are also arrested when they commit crimes, when they act against the country, when they sell our Republic. [applause]

However, we must discuss what I describe as a true democracy. There cannot be democracy in a country if we do not attend to the problem of jobs for all its citizens, if we do not meet the basic needs of food, housing, health, and education. When these needs are met, when everyone has enough food to survive, when everyone has clothes to wear, even if those clothes are very modest, when we can say that our people are receiving every form of health care, when we can say there is a real opportunity for education—not the formality of opening a school but the reality of attending that school, which requires giving those citizens resources to go to school—when we can help those who do not have shoes to go to school, when we can give the children uniforms to wear to school, when we give them all of the teaching materials needed to work in a classroom—then we will be creating a true educational democracy.

As long as we fail to do this, we will be allowing only those who have resources to attend school, while the poor cannot go. There would be no democracy then, gentlemen, because democracy means equal opportunity in basic areas. That is the basic essence of democracy.

However, in countries that have gone beyond this stage—partially because no one has completely resolved those problems—in such countries the sophisticated facet of democracy can become an important part of the struggle to perfect democracy.

However, let them not ask us to have democracy consist exclusively of that formal aspect, which does not extend to all the country's citizens. Let them ask us for fair treatment for all Panamanian sectors. From that viewpoint, we agree that there must be democracy.

Free elections? Of course, that is important, but there will be free elections when the people have food, when the people have clothing, when the people have the right to education and the opportunity to educate themselves, when the people have access to and receive all public health services.

I believe these are elementary, fundamental, basic things that we have to provide. For this reason, we have turned our eyes toward the sectors that today, more than before, are enduring the hardships of the economic noose, of the economic aggression, of this undeclared war, and, by the same token—even more effective—a war that is being tested today in Panama, assuredly for the purpose of dominating the other poor countries of the world.

We believe that is our task, and we are prepared to struggle to find solutions that will benefit the popular masses. I believe that, in this crisis, we have been able to devise, to establish mechanisms to aid the popular sectors: the food packages, which we want to extend in the very near future to all communities, not just to working people, but also to the unemployed, to those who do not have the opportunity to purchase even a single pound of rice. We will be sure to give those sectors all our support and all our aid. We will devote all our efforts to them. I think that this is the most important

matter, because some classes probably consider the food packages even offensive, because they consider themselves to be far above such details that we consider as basic.

I believe that is the task we must carry out. That is what we have to do in San Miguelito, in the depressed areas of Panama City, for our peasants, who have also been deprived of all government aid and actions. That is our democratic position. That is what we clearly understand, and that will be our goal, without denying the formal aspect of democracy. We will not make one aspect subordinate to the other.

After all, there has been freedom of expression here. There has been very broad freedom of expression here. But how has this freedom of expression been used so far? To further oppress the Panamanian people, because poverty has been increasing in Panama. It did not begin on 26 February 1988. It goes much further back, much further back, [repeates himself] and the Panamanian oligarchy, which profits from the communications media as its owners, have used the media for their own benefit and not for the common good.

Let them show that they want to resolve the country's problems by pointing this out and proving it, not by insults, slander, and lies that they cannot prove. After all that, they do not want to be punished. They want to continue to go unpunished as they have largely gone unpunished so far. That is what we are not going to condone or permit as long as we are president of the Republic of Panama, because I have a commitment to my class, to my generation, and to myself, to my personal convictions.

We will continue working. Today is my 55th day in a post that no one thought I could hold for even 5 days. They [not further identified] gave us 48 or 72 hours. No one understands the economic miracle we are accomplishing. They do not understand this, but it is very simple. It is the understanding of the popular masses, of the Panamanian people, which has allowed us to remain in the presidency of the Republic for 55 days. [applause]

No one would have believed that the system of piecemeal checks would have worked. No one would have believed that the supply houses [abastos] would have worked. No one would have believed that the people's markets would have taken on a more definitive role in the poor communities. However, all this has been established, and I want it to be clear that they were established because of the circumstances, but they will be preserved because of the historical importance of our country. We have to preserve them. It no longer matters if the supermarkets open; we will continue our supermarkets. We have to have a source of competition so that there will be no exploitation. [applause] We have to do this. We have to preserve this, and expand it. We have to create supermarkets for government workers, and supermarkets for private workers, where the small profit that is made is for the benefit of the workers and where they will get a 20- or 30-percent discount on staples or items in the basic family diet.

I believe that those are the problems that we will face, because, so far, we have been working basically on how to hold on to power in order to keep it from being handed over to a foreign country or to Panamanians who have sold out, as has been happening so far. [applause]

Gentlemen, this inauguration of the labor court here in San Miguelito, as the labor minister said, is an important step for the prompt and fair resolution of labor-management issues. Let there not be cases like Acero Panama [Panama Steel Company], where people were on strike for many, many days, and yet, when arbitration was sought, the company itself suggested that the strike continue for another 15 days. The fact is that, at present, the strike works to their benefit. They do not want to use their reserves at this time, and they do not want construction activities to continue. They want their articles to go up in price in the future, because the stock levels in their warehouses will be low. They have raised the price of a ton of steel to twice that of a ton of steel brought directly to Panama from another country. It is an industry that generates very little employment, because the raw material is received practically ready to be cut. It is not an industry that generates a lot of jobs, that has a broad national impact. No. They just want to make construction more expensive.

We have to look into those matters, to see that they are not repeated in other areas, to see that justice, at least social justice related to labor, is done speedily, so that workers do not have to remain on strike for 2 or 3 months without the protective hand of the ministry or of the national government extended to the weak. The strong already have their own protection. It is their money, their social relations, their international relations. That is their strength, but the poor worker has no one but the government, and we must fulfill this function.

We can no longer permit delays. We cannot allow dismissals to continue without any proof that the company... [changes thought] It is not just that the company is producing less. It is indeed producing less, but it has a reserve that it has been accumulating over the years. Therefore, at this time, let them begin to use their reserves. Dismissals cannot be permitted without a very solid basis, and I believe that there are very few such cases. There have been constant dismissals, and we have not stopped this. The companies cannot give leave without pay. They cannot send people on furlough. That is why they want to keep the companies closed, because they have a number of means to make the poor continue

suffering, while they reserve their reserves—pardon the pun. I believe this is a problem, Mr Minister, that must be resolved, and I hope that we pledge to do so.

In closing, I just wish to say to the ministers—and I will say it to them directly from here—that I would not like to have to use a famous phrase used by [former President] Romulo Betancourt in Venezuela. He said: My fellow party members are being left behind, and I don't know where to put them, because if I put them in front, they get in my way, and if I put them behind, they stay there. [laughter, applause] Please, I would not like that to be the case. Thank you very much. [applause]

Panamenists Holding Talks With Government
PA2104005888 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 2300 GMT 20 Apr 88

[By Manuel Cabrera]

[Excerpts] Panama City, 20 Apr (ACAN-EFE)—The Panamanian military and government may reach agreement with the largest opposition party to settle the serious crisis in Panama.

The Authentic Panamenist Party (PPA) of octogenarian Arnulfo Arias, three times president of Panama, is holding direct personal contacts with President Manuel Solis Palma and indirect contacts with General Manuel Antonio Noriega.

Today Guillermo Endara, assistant PPA secretary general and one of the two people authorized by the former president to speak on his behalf, acknowledged to ACAN-EFE the existence of the contacts "for a possible formal negotiation." All political forces recognize the need to find a peaceful solution to the political conflict that is leading the country to economic chaos, but so far attempts to settle it, including mediation by the Catholic Church, have failed. [passage omitted]

In this context, Arias' PPA has begun to partially drift away from the rest of the opposition. It has not signed the latest opposition communiques and has begun informal bilateral contacts with the government and the military.

PPA followers want their leader, who is currently in Miami, to return as constitutional president and to form a government of "national salvation" with all forces represented in the National Assembly. Simultaneously, Gen Noriega would retire, "saving face," and "voluntarily" go into exile for an undetermined period of time.

This solution would be virtually a rehash of events in 1949, in which Arias and the National Guard (forerunner of the current Panama Defense Forces) were involved. [passage omitted]

Government on Cashing Pensioners' Checks
PA2004201688 Panama City MATUTINO in Spanish 20 Apr 88 p 7

[Communique issued by the Social Security Fund in Panama City on 18 April]

[Text] The Social Security Fund, in accordance with its responsibilies and following an extended meeting with representatives of the National Bank of Panama and the Comptroller General's Office, as well as with members of the board of directors—headed by the deputy health minister and administration officials—announces the following to all pensioners and retirees:

1. The Social Security Fund will issue checks for the second fortnight of April 1988 according to the 1988 payment schedule at the preestablished places for 3 consecutive working days.

2. The checks for the second fortnight of April 1988 will be issued on 21, 22, and 25 April to all pensioners and retirees.

3. We announce that there will be three checks for the second fortnight of April 1988: one for $50, another for $100, and another for the balance due each pensioner or retiree.

4. It is important to point out that the distribution of checks will not be accompanied by the usual check-cashing service.

5. The country's situation, well-known by all, caused by the freezing of funds, which has kept banks closed, makes it impossible for us to cash checks in the usual manner.

6. The check-cashing service will depend on the liquidity available each month. Therefore, at the appropriate time we will announce the amount of checks that will be able to be cashed and the date to do so.

7. We call on all supermarkets and stores to cooperate in the cashing of checks of pensioners and retirees so they may meet their needs.

8. The Social Security Fund, whose main purpose is to meet the needs of pensioners and retirees, regrets that the current crisis, which is harming the country's workers, is harming pensioners as well. No citizen has escaped the adverse effects of the financial squeeze that all Panamanians have been unfairly subjected to.

Dr Ilka Viejo H

General Director

Panama City, 18 April 1988

Police Chief Raps U.S. Military 'Trespassing'

PA2104043488 Panama City LA REPUBLICA in Spanish 20 Apr 88 pp 1, 8

[By Reinaldo Labastide]

[Text] Today Major Roberto A. Perez, chief of the Atlantic and Pacific Military Police Battalion, told LA REPUBLICA that "each time there is a violation, we will bring it up and report it, because we will not permit further trespassing onto our national territory."

Maj Perez said that U.S. military police constantly enter the Chorrillo district in jeeps and then claim they are lost. This means that these troops get lost because they are unfamiliar with the area. However, if they get lost with some other intention, they violate the treaties. Those actions have been reported to Colonel Joseph L. A. Fournier, his U.S. counterpart.

Perez said that efforts are being made to maintain peace, but that they—the U.S. soldiers—are restless.

Perez referred to the fact that a U.S. captain—Martin D. Quintana—had been making worried telephone calls to inquire about the presence of civilians belonging to the "Dignity Battalion" in the Amador area.

"Yes, it is true that the civilian personnel had been training with the 5th Military Police Company, but I did not give any response [to the telephone call], because the area where the personnel were located was in one of the white areas—that is, a reverted area for the exclusive use of the Republic of Panama," Perez stressed.

He added that the Dignity Battalion personnel are 100-percent Panamanians who wish to go to that white area under Panama's control. "There is no reason why I should give Capt Quintana any response about that," he said.

"If they insist on this, I will present a formal protest to my counterpart, Col Fournier, who has not expressed any concern. "If we get any further calls, I will strongly protest that captain's attitude," he asserted. [quotation marks as published]

'Official Sources' on U.S. Delegation Visit

PA2004153888 Paris AFP in Spanish 1438 GMT 20 Mar 88

[Report by Isidro Sanchez]

[Excerpts] Panama City, 20 Apr (AFP)—A U.S. Government mission is in Panama "negotiating" with General Manuel Antonio Noriega for a possible resolution of this country's crisis, highly reliable sources told AFP today.

Official sources confirmed that the U.S. mission arrived over the weekend but they did not provide further details.

"After the failure of the economic and political pressures by Washington and the local opposition to oust Noriega, the Reagan administration had to choose between invasion or negotiation, and it seems to be leaning toward the latter," the sources said.

A possible agreement between the government and the opposition apparently began to develop in Panama over the weekend when the two sides began to maintain a "suspicious silence," and on Monday, the anti-U.S. campaign in various progovernment media began to be toned down. [passage omitted]

In an apparent attempt to consolidate the normalization trend, on Monday President Manuel Solis Palma ordered the reopening of banks, which have been closed since 4 March because of the shortage of dollars as a result of U.S. economic pressures.

Within this context, Solis Palma proposed to the legislature the lifting of the state of emergency established 1 month ago.

On Tuesday Solis Palma met with SELA Permanent Secretary Carlos Perez del Castillo, who will hold discussions over several days with authorities on the means by which Panama can be granted aid by SELA, which this month expressed support for this nation in the face of U.S. pressures. [passage omitted]

Banks opened today for the third consecutive day but only to "receive deposits," but they might expand their services next week if the normalization trend continues, an official source said.

Uruguay

Further on Visit by Nicaragua's Borge

Meets Labor Leaders

PY182034 Montevideo LA HORA in Spanish 10 Apr 88 p 3

[Excerpts] At 1040 the sirens of the official entourage can be heard along Canelones Street. At the offices of FUECI [Uruguayan Federation of Commerce and Industry Employees], which serves as the provisional headquarters of the PIT-CNT, the Uruguayan workers are eagerly waiting.

At 1042 Tomas Borge enters the union building, where he enthusiastically embraces Jose D'Elia, the top leader of the Uruguayan workers. The members of the PIT-CNT secretariat then greet the Nicaraguan interior minister. [passage omitted]

The Sandinist commander states that Uruguay is "at the vanguard of Latin America with its solidarity with the progressive causes of the continent."

He also states that he was pleasantly surprised by "the good sense of class consciousness, in that there is only one labor central in Uruguay, in the face of what he called "the irrationality of the division of workers that exists in other countries." [quotation marks as published] [passage omitted]

Asked to deliver a message to the Uruguayan labor movement, Borge says: "I am going to follow the example of the Uruguayan workers, who have had the political sense and the class consciousness to unite in one labor central.

"I congratulate the Uruguayan workers," he added, "who became an example, a prototype in Latin America when they took this historic decision, which, due to its roots, can only be explained by the degree of political development of the Uruguayan people as a whole. It is an example that must be followed on this continent."

Prior to these remarks, the Nicaraguan leader had referred to the situation of the Nicaraguan labor movement, which is mainly grouped in the Sandinist Central Organization of Workers, although he did mention the existence of "small" splinter groups.

"It is the more influential magnates—who are neither so influential nor so rich—that have advised the workers to divide," he said. "I'm referring to the wealthy of Nicaragua, the bourgeoisie of our country. They are united, but they advise the workers to divide—as though the workers did not have a common historical objective, just like the magnates have their objective. To me it makes sense that any worker, anywhere in the world, should understand that the interests of the working class are unique: The working class has one interest, and the bourgeoisie has another interest." [passage omitted]

Addresses Rally

PY182255 Montevideo LA HORA in Spanish 10 Apr 88 Special Supplement pp 1-4

["Text" of speech by Nicaraguan Interior Minister Tomas Borge at rally in Montevideo on 8 April]

[Text] Ever since President Sanguinetti invited me to visit Uruguay, I have been thinking with great anticipation about the right way to address this brotherly meeting with Uruguayans.

Political logic, natural respect, or revolutionary courtesy—which also exists—led me to believe I had to begin by speaking about a great man who was more of a Latin American citizen than a Uruguayan citizen, a perfect example of a man of experience, action, and careful thinking: Jose Artigas; or perhaps I had to start by speaking about our father: Augusto Sandino; or perhaps I had to begin by speaking about the joy of seeing the plains or the clean face of the exemplary solidarity of this people.

However, we have to explain our complex strategy and political tactics, the dynamism of our situation, and the reason for our decisions. This is because of the continental scope of our meeting.

Even though it is true that we have a dignity resistant to bullets, lies, and wrong interpretation; even though it is true that nobody but us is at the helm, and that we do not allow nor will we allow anything more than opinions on all or part of our decisions; even though we know our national sovereignty is true, it is also true that we enjoy the luxury of facing the world with our heads up because of, among other reasons, international solidarity.

We feel it is our obligation to give an explanation because we are thankful and because it is our international duty to do so.

We are conscious that the savage attack against Nicaragua—which imperialism does not forgive, its revolution, its independence, its capacity to survive—will not go unpunished. The death sentence against Nicaragua has not been nor will it ever be fulfilled because there is a higher tribunal to which to appeal: the tribunal of historic developments; and because there is also the parallel tribunal of the sensitivities of the peoples.

In effect, my friends, this suffering has not gone unnoticed because one way or another our sacrifice has promoted democratic changes on this continent. These changes will properly be called democratic and revolutionary, regardless of the form and means to attain them, and wherever and whenever they might occur.

What are the forms and the means?

In a moment I will briefly talk about the forms and means that we, the Sandinists, utilize to resolve our problems in Nicaragua. But first I want to say that the roads that are leading us to power are unheard of. We usually hear the expression that all roads lead to Rome, but we could say that not all roads lead to power. No revolutionary with the least self-respect, especially respect for other revolutionaries, should give any advice, and least of all propose concrete plans for taking over power.

Each people has to discover the laws of its struggle, the recipe for its own victory. I have not come here, therefore, to give my opinion or advice. I have come to explain what is happening in Nicaragua. This will hopefully help others make decisions they have the right and duty to make.

Nicaragua's sufferings, I repeat, have not been in vain because they have earned respect for our country and have set an example of worthiness, and because no crime goes unpunished.

The death sentence that is inapplicable to Nicaragua is the same death sentence that will be inevitably applied someday against the evil empire, the enemy of mankind and hope, which thought it had found the cure-all and the mechanism that would stop the course of history.

And because the sufferings to which we have been subject have not and will not go unpunished, we must give our brothers and friends a detailed explanation of why we have made so many bold and difficult decisions.

If this explanation is appropriate in other parts of the world, it is all the more so for the Uruguayan people, who have been particularly supportive of our revolutionary struggle and because they are very dear to the Nicaraguans.

We Sandinists do not ignore theory, but I think practice is what has basically helped us overcome obstacles and hesitations.

The Sandinist revolution stemmed from a people's war that adopted various forms of struggle, but without sticking to any exclusive or excluding method. The leaders of the Nicaraguan revolution did not indulge in hesitations; and although it cannot be asserted this was the reason for victory, they did resort to deeds rather than rhetoric. This is a fact and not boasting.

Although Somoza and some protagonists of the Yankee policy said the Sandinist revolution was possible because the U.S. rulers allowed it, right from the beginning it was regarded as a threat to U.S. national security, which resulted in the bad formulation of the Santa Fe Plan. But the revolution succeeded against and despite the U.S. will.

Among the basic guidelines adopted in Nicaragua we chose political pluralism, a mixed economy, and nonalignment. This political pluralism, which is more pluralist than political, and this mixed economy, which is more famous for being mixed than for being an economy [as published], make possible the existence of 16 political parties—some of them not legally recognized—that oppose the revolution and several organizations that represent private enterprise.

The existence of several sectors in political and economic life demands the attention and vitality of the revolutionary vanguard. Moreover, the task of the vanguard in this development phase is not to turn everyone into a vanguard militant. The vanguard's task is to make the largest number of citizens possible regard as their own the transformation and establishment of a superior society. This concept of democracy and pluralism makes it necessary to differentiate principles from strategy and tactics.

It forces us to realize that national unity during a revolution is difficult to achieve and that the political vanguard has exercised control while at the same time accepting contradictions as well as ideological and political struggle.

In view of imperialism's policy of force, the Sandinist revolution has firmly adopted a military doctrine designed for defense, as well as a peace strategy.

The Sandinist popular revolution experienced its most difficult moment when the fatal and painful division took place, when tactical differences and aspirations of hegemony appeared as radical strategic differences and even as disagreements of an ideological nature. The maturity of the Nicaraguan leaders not only made it possible to overcome the differences, but allowed the establishment of a Sandinist leadership of a collective nature known as the Sandinist National Liberation Front, from which the caudillo and unilateral decision-making policy are excluded, and within which criticism and self-criticism is practiced—in an exemplary manner, I believe—without any sign of sadism, complacency, or hypocrisy.

We are convinced that unity does not mean to add but to multiply, and that the product of the joint strategic efforts will grow in geometric progression. Victory is impossible without unity, just as unity is impossible to achieve without giving up individualism.

The balance between historic strategy, whose first principle is the survival of the untouchable—that is, of what is essential—and the tactics in the management of our routine political affairs has led us to sign the Esquipulas accords without hesitation and with the firm determination to comply with them. Our willingness to comply with them and our fulfillment of their terms have empowered us to demand compliance from the other sides.

Why did we sign them?

The weak are compelled to negotiate, while the strong decide to negotiate. We were not compelled to negotiate; we decided to negotiate.

The war against Nicaragua has lasted 8 years. The balance of power has always favored the revolution, both in military and political terms. In the past year this balance became obvious and clear to any observer, and that is what most media have reported, particularly the U.S. media. This strategic advantage was coupled with the growing deterioration of the credibility of the U.S. Government, which was further aggravated by the downing of a plane flown by a Yankee mercenary, the Iran-contra scandal, and the International Court of Justice decision to condemn the United States.

Consequently, along with the natural weariness caused by the war, conditions were ripe for engaging in serious negotiations, with prospects for success.

Some chiefs of state of the other Central American countries were influenced by the idea that the counterrevolution had neither political nor military prospects, and they probably realized the Sandinist revolution was willing to declare a general state of war that would involve the entire revolutionary people to give a final decisive blow to the contras. The chiefs of state must have realized that the counterrevolution would thus reap no benefit at all from any negotiations. This was actually true.

It was therefore obvious to them that this was the right time for signing an accord. The Sandinists, who support peace not out of our desire to gain an advantage but out of principle, did not hesitate to put the Nicaraguan president's signature on the Esquipulas agreements.

Anyone with a bit of honor and a bit of common sense knows Nicaragua is the country that has best complied with the famous agreements. This is so obvious that it has even been recognized by the U.S. press, including THE NEW YORK TIMES, which no one would dare describe as a pro-Sandinist paper.

While following the narrow path that the Esquipulas agreements have opened in the Central American political geography, we have taken the initiative of undertaking two types of negotiations: The national dialogue, mainly political in nature, with the 16 opposition parties; and the cease-fire with the counterrevolution, which is above all a technical matter.

What are the contents, the logic, and the scope of this process? Von Clausewitz has said war is the continuation of politics by other means. To this undeniable contention we can add that politics can be the continuation of war through other means.

What do I mean by all this? Once we attain the peace desired by everyone except the emotional, messianic, and clumsy U.S. Administration, the struggle wil continue almost exclusively in the bloodless battleground of politics and ideology. The winner of this struggle will be the one who wins the support of not a controlling electoral minority [minoria mayoritaria], but of a unanimous, absolute majority, the working masses, peasants, and the rest of the population.

Although we cannot make just a simplistic prediction, we can make one that would be logical in historical terms. I am not saying this to discourage those who consider democracy as the sum of victories and defeat; in my opinion, our enemies will gather in loud minorities. These minorities will be supported by imperialism, by vulgar anticommunism, by traitors, by orthodox groups, by those who support everlasting regression, by those who believe in the exploitation of man, and by those who will try to take power through manipulations, conquering territories and consciences.

However, in order to reach our objectives, we must attain peace.

We will obtain this peace in Esquipulas, Sapoa, and Managua; with Contadora and its Support Group, the OAS, the United Nations, and the International Court of Justice; with international solidarity; with the will for peace of the political parties, governors, personalities, religious people, artists, and the man on the street; and with the support of the peoples of all latitudes.

We understand our people's wish for peace. The Nicaraguan people want peace, and the Sandinist Front has the duty of defending and promoting this wish.

This effort is connected to the fact that our hopes for economic progress to improve the standard of living, health conditions, and educational facilities of our people have virtually been frozen as a consequence of the war.

Tens—perhaps hundreds—of investment projects have been suspended to defend the motherland. Thousands—tens of thousands—of young students, professionals, workers, and peasants have left their work to join the military defense of the revolution.

The whole society feels the consequences of war. There are tens of thousands of dead, thousands of maimed people, and many orphans, as well as the economic troubles and shortages.

Our people have struggled continuously and have shown limitless patience and heroism. The Nicaraguan people deserve peace.

Our enemy's strategy is to win by making us hungry. If they could, they would dry up the lakes, ponds, and rivers to force us to give in because of thirst.

Our enemy even speculated on the possibility that our people would rebel in the face of the shortages of supplies. Our enemy tried to lead our people to commit parricide, that is, to murder the child who opened our people's eyes in the painful delivery of 19 July 1970. [sentence as published]

Our enemy made useless efforts to increase the social base of the counterrevolution. It made useless efforts to lower the eyes of our people. It was impossible to try to make us fall on our knees.

The human and family solidarity diligently and spontaneously practiced by all Nicaraguans diminished the effects of the shortages.

In any case, our thirst and hunger for justice and for respect for our revolutionary principles has increased.

Let no one be deceived. The Nicaraguan people continue to be anti-imperialist and Sandinist. The Nicaraguan people have been and will always be revolutionary.

During the negotiations, preliminary agreements were reached with the counterrevolution a few days ago in Sapoa. We were the first to comply with those agreements by releasing 100 counterrevolutionary prisoners. On the day this difficult step was taken, I explained that if the release of 100 or 1,000 prisoners could save a single drop of blood of a people's soldier, this decision should then be welcomed.

The crucial part of the Sapoa agreement is the determination of the geographic zones where the counterrevolutionaries will be located and where they will receive food and supplies, so that disarmament may begin on 15 April, and so they can join Nicaraguan political life.

The negotiations have entered the most sensitive stage, because some counterrevolutionary sectors oppose peace, showing an open affinity with the Reagan administration.

What concessions did we make in this negotiation? What concessions are we willing to make? What has been changed and what has remained unchanged?

I should say first that there can be no negotiation without mutual concessions. Negotiations are, or they should be, the opposite of intransigence, although it is essential to add that we cannot make concessions that will deny the essence of the Sandinist people's revolution. We cannot harbor illusions or adopt impartial or utopian views; unanimity is impossible to achieve, just as the exploited and the exploiters cannot live on a permanent honeymoon.

This, however, does not deny the possibility of forming alliances. A honeymoon is for those who love each other, while an alliance is for those who hold opposite views.

We cannot give up our plan to build a fair, democratic, egalitarian, and independent society, a society in which the proper channels have been designed to insure abundance and cultural development, and to condemn selfishness, ignorance, and foolishness; a society which, after having returned to the essentials of the fatherland, should take deep root in those foundations and in the most beautiful dreams of men.

Our plan is unpostponable. We defended it with our rifles and with our hands, with battalions of irregular forces and with our sweet, frank, subversive words.

Sixty percent of our national budget has been earmarked for this plan. More than 50,000 people were killed or injured, more than 10,000 children lost their parents, and 250,000 people were displaced because of the war through which we have defended this plan. Uruguayan people, these figures apply to a country with a little more than 3,000,000 inhabitants.

Yet to defend this plan does not mean to oppose peace. The plan is based on peace, and in order to defend peace we are willing to pay any price and face the consequences.

As soon as the possibility for negotiating was opened, we obviously took that course to save the people's blood and prevent destruction.

But our analysis would be unilateral if we did not ask why the counterrevolutionaries are negotiating.

Like it or not, despite its power, despite our small territory and population, and despite our poverty, the policy of the Reagan administration has failed. It was a complete failure; it failed both militarily and politically. It did fail.

The Reagan administration could not seize any territory; it could hardly seize the conscience of some people, many of whom had already been subservient in the past, while others sold themselves, at times in a public auction.

Despite the fact it has been a dream in the private rooms of the White House, the Reagan administration could not form a provisional government, because it has never established a stable position on a single square kilometer; the Reagan administration even failed to receive sufficient support from its own Congress. It is obvious the Latin American people and governments do not agree with interference and blackmail.

It is not by chance that we have received expressions of solidarity from chiefs of state; congresses; parties; multiparty organizations like the Permanent Conference of Latin American Political Parties (COPPPAL), the Latin American political party organization, and the Socialist International; and, above all, from the peoples of all the continents. Neither did the Contadora Group and the Contadora Support Group begin to operate by chance.

The Esquipulas peace plan was not signed just by chance. Neither is it by chance that the European Community, the socialist countries, and the Third World countries have expressed their support not only for the peace plan but also for the Nicaraguan people's right to be free, sovereign, and independent.

The material reserves of the U.S. Government are practically inexhaustible, but the moral grounds of its aggression against Nicaragua grow increasingly weaker.

That is why some counterrevolutionary sectors believe a solution should be found to the war. Reagan has not failed to support them. No hatred in the history of the Americas has been so great and sustained as the hatred that Reagan feels toward Nicaragua. He did everything in his power. He delivered hundreds of millions of dollars, spread tens of liters [as published] of bitterness, resorted to his charisma and arrogance, compared the counterrevolutionaries with the heroes of the U.S. war of independence, and tried to smash the honor of the

Nicaraguan revolutionaries after he murdered women and children. He did and he still does everything in his power. Reagan did not fail to support the counterrevolutionaries. He was simply defeated by a small, impoverished country, although—not to hurt Mr Reagan's pride so much—we will say that it is the same country whose people defeated the Yankee Marines during the 7-year war in which the sovereignty of Nicaragua was defended under the leadership of our national hero, Augusto Sandino.

We have to state our commitments clearly.

We are committed to allowing the participation of all those who might want to enter the political arena. This right is guaranteed in principle by the revolution's program and is reaafirmed by our Constitution. In practice, however, we used to exclude the followers of the Somozist regime for obvious reasons. One way or another, they were accomplices of or covered up for this genocidal regime.

This also includes the freedom, within the framework of a process, for counterrevolutionaries who are under arrest and for Somozist National Guard officers and soldiers, excluding those duly found guilty of committing crimes by a specialized organization [organismo especializado].

There is no doubt that achieving peace in Nicaragua would represent an important step in the pacification of Central America. It would also represent a contribution to world peace, to the easing of tension at the international level.

But if the United States thwarts the negotiating process after all the effort we have made, what alternative is left other than a head-on clash? We do not negotiate for tactical reasons, we do not negotiate merely so it may be said that we support peace; we negotiate to reach peace.

This concern has its bases, and I am not talking about the U.S. military base in Palmerola, Honduras, because it is quite obvious that Reagan has not given up his hopes of destroying—an impossible hope—the Nicaraguan revolution.

There is no doubt he will continue to exert pressure on the counterrevolutionary forces not to negotiate and on Congress to authorize lethal aid.

So far he has received humanitarian aid only once, and we foresaw this in the Sapoa agreements. This aid in itself would not be significant had it not been that it set a precedent and also because it was accompanied by a covert delivery of weapons, which ultimately was the reason for the U.S. invasion of Honduras with the 82d Airborne Division, which Mr Reagan diabolically sent without even bothering to consult Honduran President Azcona, bypassing congresses, laws, and the leaders of our Honduran brothers.

Although Reagan has the necessary means to exert pressure, it does not mean he can do anything. He can no longer impose his will so easily or influence the course of events with the same strength and agility as a year ago.

There is no doubt that Reagan is not going to accept defeat, and until the last day, the last minute, not only of his presidential term but also of his long life, he will make every effort to defeat the undefeatable, irreversible popular Sandinist revolution.

Mr Reagan might find it sad if we recall the promise he made in 1986 to Clare Booth Luce that he would get rid of Nicaragua and the Sandinist before he ended his last presidential term.

I do not want to criticize Mr Reagan for anything, but I am sure he will not be able to fulfill that promise because no one should doubt that the Sandinists will fulfill the promise we made to carry out an irreversible revolution.

Despite everything, we are flexible, realistic, and sure of ourselves, so much so that we are willing to sit at the negotiating table with Mr Reagan or whoever will succeed him to discuss our differences and to reassure those who still erroneously believe Nicaragua represents a threat to U.S. national security.

Nicaragua remains faithful to the principle that people have the right to self-determination, freedom, democracy, struggle against exploitation, pride, and national integrity. This is why we are now alert, united, and in a combative, political, and moral position in the face of the dramatic situation being experienced by the sister country of Panama.

At this difficult time, Latin Americans, all Latin Americans without exceptions, have the obligation to strongly support the beliefs sustained by Torrijos, Artigas, and Sandino which are now the beliefs of the people of Panama and which are also our beliefs. Any attack on the people of Panama is also an attack on the Nicaraguan people, on all Central American people, on all Latin American people.

The attack is aimed at violating the commitments signed by General Torrijos.

The signed agreement says that the Panama Canal will be turned over to the Panamanians by the year 2000. Latin Americans are obligated to ensure that the agreement is fulfilled, that the Panamanian people receive support in these difficult and future difficult hours to come.

I believe it is appropriate to say that we also support the Paraguayan and Chilean people in their struggle against subjection and repression. With all our hearts we support the Argentine people in their just struggle for the Malvinas Islands. Militarily speaking, we are with the South African and Palestinian people.

If we are faithful to the Latin American people, how could we deny our unconditional solidarity with the Puerto Rican people in their struggle for independence?

We are united with the Latin American people by being united with our own revolution, which in many ways is not ours but belongs to all people.

The Nicaraguan peace plan is the Central American peace plan. It is an answer to the real desire for peace of the Latin American people. This is why achieving peace at any cost is so valuable. This is why if despite all the efforts, war and irrationality break out again, we will be obligated to seek the end of the conflict. But this will be done only after there is absolutely no doubt that we did everything possible to facilitate a negotiated and peaceful resolution of the conflict.

If there is no other choice, and only if there is no other choice, no one will be able to question our right to use all the means at our disposal to put an end to the war, and the most important means is the formidable force of the revolutionary people.

Once we run out of choices there will be only one left to put an end to the war and achieve peace and that choice is the use of our resources by fully applying the doctrine which integrates the strategic and historic defense of the revolution.

Uruguayans:

We are obligated to strengthen Latin American unity, and to transform that unity into concrete actions we must demand a just economic order and the final resolution once and for all of the foreign debt problem, which is permanently bleeding us.

We also demand a new and just international information order and to openly take over democracy, in other words we demand a new economic, ideological, and cultural order.

This new order means our ability to have our Latin American identity and to be able to freely decide the destiny of all the Latin American people.

Brothers, we are optimistic. The Latin American people are illustrious, indomitable, and immortal. The Latin American people are always protecting and watching, and among those people the Uruguayans are vanguards of fraternity to keep in check the hands which are trying to strangle us. As long as people like the Uruguayan people exist, the popular Sandinist revolution will not die. Free fatherland or death.

Foreign Ministry Condemns Mideast Hijacking

PY200342 Montevideo EL DIA in Spanish
15 Apr 88 p 5

[Text] On 14 April the Foreign Ministry released a communique stating that "the Uruguayan Government, concerned about the hijacking of a Kuwaiti Airline jet that has already caused two deaths, reiterates its strong condemnation of such insane, violent terrorist actions."

The communique adds that "faithful to its traditional support for the law, and convinced that the international community must promote the effective respect for human rights within the law—especially for the most elementary right, which is the right to life—the Uruguayan Government reiterates its resolute support for the joint international efforts to fight the scourge of terrorism that has hit mankind."

Montevideo, 14 April 1988